

**CITY OF BRIDGEPORT
ECONOMIC AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE
REGULAR MEETING
DECEMBER 16, 2014**

ATTENDANCE: Jack O. Banta, Co-chair; Lydia Martinez, Co-chair; Michelle Lyons, Richard DeJesus

OTHERS: Council Member Enrique Torres, Terron Jones, EOC; Walker Jones, Trust for Public Land, Renu Gupta, Central Grants Office; Christine Smith, Central Grants Director, Steve Hladun, Parks Department

CALL TO ORDER

Council Member Banta called the meeting to order at 6:15 p.m. A quorum was present.

APPROVAL OF COMMITTEE MINUTES OF OCTOBER 21, 2014.

**** COUNCIL MEMBER MARTINEZ MOVED THE COMMITTEE
MINUTES OF OCTOBER 21, 2014.
** COUNCIL MEMBER DEJESUS SECONDED.
** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

02-14 Grant Submission: re FY 2014-2015 Medical Reserve Corps Capacity Building Award. (#15397)

Mr. Terron Jones came forward and explained that the grant funding would be used to create a junior Medical Reserve Corps (MRC), which is a volunteer organization that responds to natural disasters. The group is looking to have 100 youth involved in the program.

**** COUNCIL MEMBER MARTINEZ MOVED TO APPROVE AGENDA
ITEM 02-14 GRANT SUBMISSION: RE FY 2014-2015 MEDICAL RESERVE
CORPS CAPACITY BUILDING AWARD. (#15397)
** COUNCIL MEMBER DEJESUS SECONDED.
** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

182-13 Grant Submission: re Department of Interior - National Park Service, Land and Water Conservation Fund Outdoor Recreation Legacy Partnership Program - Johnson Oak Park Development Project (#15462).

Ms. Gupta introduced Ms. Holmes and Mr. Layton. Ms. Holms came forward and said that the National Park Service, Land and Water Conservation Fund Outdoor Recreation Legacy Partnership Program was a national organization and has been working in the East End and with the students at Tisdale School. The students have come up with a new design for Johnson Oak Park. Ms. Gupta said that they had applied for Phase 1 to start construction. Mr. Layton came forward and said that this was part of the Parks Master Plan. He said that there is a lot of usage

with the Pop Warner League and also with the Firebirds Cookout. The goal is to make this a wonderful park to utilize. With some grant funding, the department hopes to leverage that for even more funding. He spoke about how New York City had worked on revitalization the rundown parks and made it safer.

Council Member Lyons asked about the status of a request for a handicapped accessible park. Mr. Layton said that the Parks Department was working on making Beardsley Park accessible and mentioned another park that was being updated. The splash pads that have been installed in the various parks have been made accessible. He added that Pulgio Park was also being made accessible. She mentioned an incident where a child required stitches because of the way the nails had been put in the fencing.

Council Member DeJesus asked how the cost of the maintenance on the parks. He pointed out that in the last few years, there had been a great deal of green added to the City. Mr. Layton said that Johnson Oak was an established park. Mr. Layton said that on the General Operating Budget, the Parks has a line item for maintenance. Council Member DeJesus said that the grant funding was a one-time grant to build the park. Ms. Holmes said that as a non-profit organization, they try to help with the maintenance costs via the stewardship dollars that they would seek to raise from private sources.

Council Member DeJesus asked if the City would be obligated to provide either in kind services or matching funds for the maintenance costs. Ms. Holmes and Ms. Gupta both said that each funding opportunity varies.

Council Member DeJesus pointed out that this park was maintained by the BOE. Council Member Torres pointed out that the City owns the land but the BOE should maintain it. Discussion followed about the park improvements and the role of the BOE in the future maintenance.

Council Member Torres asked if it had been budgeted in a previous year and where the money was coming from. Mr. Layton said that it was from the Capital Improvement budget for Parks Improvements.

Council Member Lyons said that the questions should be submitted to the Grants Department.

**** COUNCIL MEMBER MARTINEZ MOVED TO TABLE AGENDA ITEM 182-13 GRANT SUBMISSION: RE DEPARTMENT OF INTERIOR - NATIONAL PARK SERVICE, LAND AND WATER CONSERVATION FUND OUTDOOR RECREATION LEGACY PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM - JOHNSON OAK PARK DEVELOPMENT PROJECT (#15462) SO THAT THE QUESTIONS CAN BE SUBMITTED TO THE GRANTS DEPARTMENT.**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER DEJESUS SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

167-13 Proposed request that the City Establish a Moratorium of future Tax Abatements, Expansions or Proliferation on any not-for-profit organization.

**** COUNCIL MEMBER MARTINEZ MOVED TO TABLE AGENDA ITEM 167-13 PROPOSED REQUEST THAT THE CITY ESTABLISH A MORATORIUM OF FUTURE TAX ABATEMENTS, EXPANSIONS OR PROLIFERATION ON ANY NOT-FOR-PROFIT ORGANIZATION.**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER LYONS SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION TO TABLE PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Council Member Torres said that he was surprised because he had originated the resolution and was present to speak about it.

**** COUNCIL MEMBER MARTINEZ MOVED TO TAKE AGENDA ITEM 167-13 PROPOSED REQUEST THAT THE CITY ESTABLISH A MORATORIUM OF FUTURE TAX ABATEMENTS, EXPANSIONS OR PROLIFERATION ON ANY NOT-FOR-PROFIT ORGANIZATION OFF THE TABLE.**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER LYONS SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION REMOVE THE ITEM FROM THE TABLE PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Council Member Torres said that last time there was a legal issue about the non-profits. Council Member Torres said that he asked that when a non-profit was given a tax abatement, the cost of the abatement should be given to the Council Members. He said that Cherry Street was a low income development, but once three children move into the development, the City will start to lose money because it will be a hidden tax increase. When the re-evaluation happens in 2016, Black Rock, the North End and another section will be hit hard. The moratorium is to establish ground rules going forward so that the Council Members know what it will cost the taxpayers when these abatements happen.

Council Member Torres said that he was willing to work with Mr. Coleman to develop a program. He suggested that this item should be tabled, but if another request for a tax abatement comes in, it should be tabled until the questions are answered. He spoke about the development and reminded everyone that when children move in, it costs the City money.

Council Member Martinez said that it would be important to have that kind of information. Council Member Torres suggested that there be an independent study. He pointed out that the property was currently paying \$120,000 in taxes a year, but the City was going to cut it down to \$35,000.

Council Member Lyons suggested that the Council get together to discuss issues like this.

**** COUNCIL MEMBER MARTINEZ MOVED TO TABLE AGENDA ITEM 167-13 PROPOSED REQUEST THAT THE CITY ESTABLISH A MORATORIUM OF FUTURE TAX ABATEMENTS, EXPANSIONS OR PROLIFERATION ON ANY NOT-FOR-PROFIT ORGANIZATION.**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER LYONS SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION TO TABLE PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

186-13 Proposed Resolution regarding Reservoir Neighborhood Revitalization Zone-By-Laws and Boundaries Plan.

There was no one to present this item to the Committee.

**** COUNCIL MEMBER MARTINEZ MOVED TO TABLE AGENDA ITEM 186-13 PROPOSED RESOLUTION REGARDING RESERVOIR NEIGHBORHOOD REVITALIZATION ZONE-BY-LAWS AND BOUNDARIES PLAN.**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER LYONS SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION TO TABLE PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

06-14 Grant Submission: re: State Department of Economic and Community Development for a Historic Brownfield Revitalization Program (#15409)

Mr. Frank Crow came forward to give an overview of the Brownfield. He explained that he was a new member of OPED. This project is a coordinated effort between the DECD and OPED to target old mill sites that might catch on fire. He explained that this funding was for 899 Barnum Avenue, which is directly behind the train station. Mr. Crow said that the City was in the process of obtaining the property through foreclosure. Discussion followed about what would happen if the City did not obtain ownership of the parcel, since the Grant is specific to the site. Ms. Smith then explained that the property was in foreclosure, but if the City does not have ownership when the grant is awarded, the DEC will not allocate the funding. Discussion followed. Council Member DeJesus said that he knew that if a property had a tax lien and someone bought the tax lien, but then the owner redeemed the taxes, the person who had purchased the tax lien loses out. Mr. Crow said that this was already in court under Chapter 11. Ms. Smith said that it would be important to know which category this property was in.

**** COUNCIL MEMBER MARTINEZ MOVED TO APPROVE AGENDA ITEM 06-14 GRANT SUBMISSION: RE: STATE DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT FOR A HISTORIC BROWNFIELD REVITALIZATION PROGRAM (#15409) WITH THE CONDITION THAT THE QUESTION OF THE LEGAL CLASSIFICATION OF THE PROPERTY (TAX LIEN VS. FORECLOSURE) IS ANSWERED.**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER DEJESUS SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION TO TABLE PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

ADJOURNMENT

**** COUNCIL MEMBER MARTINEZ MOVED TO ADJOURN.**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER LYONS SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION TO ADJOURN PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The meeting adjourned at 7:20 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

S. L. Soltes

Telesco Secretarial Services